

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An article for clamping a plurality of objects together, comprising:

a body portion, comprised of spring wire, formed in a generally c-shape, including:

a pair of side portions;

an intermediate portion, extending between and interconnecting the pair of side portions; and

a pair of opposed free end portions, extending from the pair of side portions and opposite the intermediate portion, and forming a gap therebetween;

~~wherein the pair of opposed free end portions~~ which are resiliently biased by the pair of side portions and the intermediate portion toward a position proximate each other and spaced apart to the extent of the gap therebetween, and are adapted to be expanded away from each other upon the exertion of expansion pressure on the pair of side portions, so as to extend about the plurality of objects to be clamped between the pair of opposed free end portions, and to resiliently compress towards each other and return to the resiliently biased position thereof to exert pressure on and clamp the plurality of objects between the pair of opposed free end portions upon the release of the expansion pressure and compression of the pair of side portions responsive thereto;

wherein the pair of side portions, the intermediate portion, and the pair of opposed free end portions all extend in the same plane.

2. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein each of the pair of side portions and the intermediate portion includes a generally straight portion thereof.

3. (currently amended) The article of claim 1, wherein each of the pair of side portions includes a pressure exertion enabling portion adapted to enable engagement thereof and pressure to be exerted thereon for expansion of the clamping article.

4. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the intermediate portion includes a medial portion generally curved inwardly towards the pair of opposed free end portions.

5. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the body portion is formed in a generally block-c-shape.

6. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the body portion is generally round in cross-section.

7. (cancelled)

8. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the pair of opposed free ends extend substantially in the plane of the pair of side portions and the intermediate portion.

9. (original) The article of claim 1, wherein the pair of opposed free end portions are substantially aligned.

10. (currently amended) The article of claim 3, wherein the pressure exertion enabling portion of each of the pair of side portions comprises a generally outwardly curved portion which is generally curved outwardly away from the opposite side portion.

11. (original) The article of claim 4, wherein the generally inwardly curved medial portion of the intermediate portion is adapted to enable the return of the article to the resiliently biased position upon the release of expansion pressure.

12. (original) The article of claim 5, wherein the pair of opposed free end portions are adapted to be aligned, and the generally block-c-shape of the article is adapted to maintain the alignment of the pair of opposed free end portions.

13. (currently amended) The article of claim 107, wherein the generally outwardly curved portion of each of the pair of side portions is located proximate the opposed free end portion extending therefrom.

14. (currently amended) The article of claim 107, wherein the generally outwardly curved ~~pressure exertion enabling~~ portions of the pair of side portions are adapted to provide leverage for enabling the exertion of expansion pressure thereon.